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PSC 120S.01: Introduction to Comparative Politics

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THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
Department of Political Science

PSc 120 Introduction to
Comparative Politics
Autumn 1999

Dr. Laslovich
Office: LA 415
Hrs: MW 10-11:00,
TR 2-3:00 & by app't (4418)

Course Description

An introduction to the key concepts and values political scientists use to understand how societies govern themselves in face of a wide variety of political, cultural, historical, and economic circumstances and dilemmas. Contrasting political cultures, ideologies and philosophies, constitutional frameworks, party and electoral systems, and interest groups among democratic and authoritarian states will be covered. According to John D. Nagle, the comparative study of government must focus on the "politics of transformation" in light of the ongoing transition from the "normal politics" that characterized the Cold War era. Politics has become uncertain as countries seek to manage great transformations in a globalizing political economy "without a road map and a patented 'success formula'" (vii).

Students will assess each regime type's performance in several areas: economic growth, social inequality, personal liberty, and quality of life. An overall assessment of a country's politics thus represents the overall balance of performance success and deficiencies. Students will consider the trade-offs among values in pursuit of governance.

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students should have a basic understanding of the key concepts and values political scientist's use to understand how different regime types (western democratic, communist, developing) govern themselves and the challenges and conflicts that are reshaping political life across the globe.

Texts

Students are required to read the following texts, which are available at the University Bookstore:

Nagle, John D. Introduction to Comparative Politics, Challenges of Conflict and Change in a New Era. 5th ed. Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1998, and

Soe, Christian, ed. Comparative Politics 99/00, Annual Editions. Sluice Dock, Connecticut: Dushkin/McGraw-Hill, 1999.

Course Requirements

Students will be evaluated upon the following basis:

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| Exam 1 (Sept. 17) Topics I-II | 25% |
| Exam 2 (Oct. 15) Topic III | 25% |
| Exam 3 (Nov. 12) Topic IV | 25% |
| Final Exam (Wed., Dec. 15, 8:00-10:00) Topic V | 25% |

Drop/Add Deadlines

Sept. 20 - Last day to drop and add courses by Dial Bear.

Oct. 11 - Last day to drop (no refund) and add classes and to change grading option.

Makeup Exam Policy

Students who are excused from a scheduled exam may write a makeup. In fairness to all students, exam absences must be approved by the instructor.

The Classroom Learning Environment (authored by Dr. Ronald Perrin, Professor of Political Theory)

Wherever the learning process takes place (for example, in the library or the seclusion of one's study) it does so best when there are a minimum of distractions. This requirement poses special challenges for the learning that takes place in the lecture hall or the classroom, where the possibility of distractions is the greatest.

In order to establish and maintain a supportive learning environment for my students I will not tolerate the few individuals who might be prone to: a) come to class late or leave early, b) carry on private conversations during class, or c) use the lecture hall/classroom as an opportunity to read material, such as the Kaimin, that is not relevant to the subject matter under consideration.

The only exception to these conditions concerns students whose work schedules or unanticipated appointments require them to arrive for class late or leave early. In these instances I would appreciate knowing of the circumstance before it occurs and, in all such instances, request that students do so as unobtrusively as possible.

Thank you.

Lecture Topics and Readings

I Introduction – “Managing Conflict and Change”

II Comparison

Nagle, chapter 1.

Soe, articles 48,49,50.

III Post-liberal Democracies

Nagle, chapters 2-6.

Soe, articles 1-24.

IV Post Communist Systems

Nagle, chapters 7-11.

Soe, articles 30-33, 40, 41, 46 %47.

V Post Third World Countries

Nagle, chapters 12-16.

Soe, articles 34-39, 42-44.